



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

January 21, 2015

## **Former Union Grove Volunteer Fire Department Treasurer Steals \$4,954**

A special investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has revealed that former fire department treasurer Donna Hurst stole at least \$4,954 from the Union Grove Volunteer Fire Department in McMinn County.

During the period June 2012 through January 2013, Ms. Hurst cashed 21 unauthorized fire department checks that she wrote to herself and used the proceeds for her personal benefit. Ms. Hurst signed the fire chief's name on all of these checks. Examples can be found in the [investigative report](#).

Investigators also discovered Ms. Hurst stole an indeterminable amount of fundraiser collections. This money was gathered during the fire department's "boot drive" and car wash fundraisers.



On November 18, 2014 the McMinn County Grand Jury indicted Donna Hurst on 20 counts of forgery and one count of theft over \$1,000.

Investigators identified a lack of financial controls within the Union Grove Volunteer Fire Department. Ms. Hurst was allowed to receive collections, make deposits, sign checks, and she was the only official who reviewed bank statements. Fire department officials indicate they have corrected or intend to correct these issues.

"Tennessee's volunteer fire departments often count on the public to financially support their operations," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "It is vital that fire officials create oversight within their departments to safeguard public money."

To view the special investigation report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at (800) 232-5454, or file a report online at: [www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline](http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline). Follow us on twitter: [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT)

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